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ADDRESS

BY

WILLIAM M. DICKSON,

AT

OBERLIN, OHIO, OCTOBER 3, 1865,

WITH

JOHN STUART MILL'S LETTER ON RECONSTRUCTION.

OBERLIN COLLEGE
HISTORICAL COLLECTION.
FROM
Rev. Geo. Clark

The Absolute Equality of all Men before the Law, the only true basis of Reconstruction.

Negroes. Reconstruction

AN ADDRESS,

BY

WILLIAM M. DICKSON,

DELIVERED AT

OBERLIN, OHIO, OCTOBER 3, 1865,

WITH AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

JOHN STUART MILLS' LETTER ON RECONSTRUCTION, AND THE CORRESPONDENCE THEREWITH CONNECTED.

CINCINNATI:
ROBERT CLARKE & Co., 55 WEST FOURTH ST.
1865.

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Spec. Coll / Anti-slavery

OBERLIN, *October 4th*, 1865.

HON. W. M. DICKSON,

DEAR SIR:

The audience, who listened to your address last evening, unanimously instructed me to request a copy thereof for publication. Very respectfully,

E. A. FAIRCHILD, *President*.

SAMUEL PLUMB, *Secretary*.

CINCINNATI, *October 13th*, 1865.

GENTLEMEN:

Your letter of the 4th inst. was duly received. In deference to the wishes of the audience, I comply with your request—happy, if any words of mine may be of service in securing to all men equal rights before the law. Duty and interest alike indicate the policy of the Union party. It cannot be faithless to the freedman or the public creditor. It cannot permanently retain within, or add to its ranks, the negro hater or the rebel; these will naturally seek another organization. The effort, in the recent canvass, of certain eminent Union leaders, to reach these classes, by underbidding the Democracy, has not been a success. It savored of the ancient Whig policy; and if persisted in, the Union party will meet and merit the fate of that party. We must continually appeal to the higher sentiments; otherwise we ~~will~~ should and ought to fail.

Truly Yours,

W. M. DICKSON.

MESSRS. FAIRCHILD AND PLUMB.

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ADDRESS.

FELLOW CITIZENS:—The long war with its destruction of precious life, its fearful waste, its harrowing anxieties, is now happily over. It has not been a failure. The object for which it was waged, has been completely attained. The rebellion is suppressed, and the territorial integrity of the Union is secure. The Constitution and laws made in pursuance thereof, are every where supreme. All this, too, has been accomplished without any degrading or embarrassing compromise. The original purpose, in this respect, of loyal men has been carried out to the letter. The rebellion has gained nothing by its violation of law, nothing by its appeal from the decision of the ballot-box to the trial by battle. Its results hold out no premium for a future one; and it is a precedent not likely soon to be followed. If its strength and prowess were remarkable, not less so is its complete discomfiture. The position of its chief *now*, and *then*, presents one of the most striking as well as instructive contrasts of history. For these auspicious results, we are indebted, under God, to the patriotism, intelligence, and constancy of the whole loyal people —seen in the endurance and bravery of their citizen soldiery, in the skill of their military chieftains, in their vast loans to their country, and in the wisdom of the administration of their Government.

Our gratification at these results is the more complete, when we remember the dangers we have escaped. All this, indeed, might have been otherwise, and there have been hours, when the stoutest heart almost failed, and the most sanguine began to grow faint-hearted. It may be profitable to call some of these occasions to mind. When

our "wayward sisters" were abandoning the parental roof, that they might be free from its salutary restraints, they did not profess to do so in violation of the sacred proprieties of life, but claimed that they were acting in strict conformity therewith. They would not merely live the lives of an abandon, but they would commend their conduct as an example for the guidance of others. Dropping the figure, suggested by Gen. Scott's famous letter:—the rebel states did not place their action upon the ground of the right of revolution, but claimed that they were acting in strict conformity with the Constitution, and that any attempt upon the part of the Government to prevent them going, would be in violation of that instrument.

This insidious assumption accomplished a double purpose. In the South it removed any scruples of conscience, on the part of those who had taken an oath to support the Constitution; and it made it the duty, as in the performance of a Constitutional obligation, of the minority to take up arms in behalf of the rebel majority, against the Government, which sought by force to preserve the integrity of the nation. By this sort of reasoning, a large minority throughout the South, came to the support of the original seceders, and fought as bravely as any in behalf of the rebellion. And thus a complete unity was established in almost all the seceding States.

In the North, this insidious assumption was successfully used to divide opinion and to paralyze the Government, then in the hands of Mr. Buchanan. A large party of the North, in harmony of principle and feeling with the rebels, either declared that the rebel States had a right to secede, or maintaining silence on this point, furiously denounced as unconstitutional, any use of force to preserve the Union. This latter point was helped out by another and subsidiary assumption, namely, that there was no constitutional power to make war upon a State. And the exercise of the customary power, ever since the Constitution was framed, of compelling obedience on the part of

individuals to the laws of the Union, was denounced as making war upon a State. So it came to this, that all efforts upon the part of the Government to defend its own existence were unconstitutional, while all efforts upon the part of the rebels to break it up, were legitimate and constitutional.

Thus were the ordinary relations of things changed. The rebel States were the legitimists, and the Government itself the outlaw. The part became greater than the whole; the State, than the general Government. These assumptions had complete mastery of Mr. Buchanan; and to so great an extent was the country demoralized by them, that able loyal men, as a matter of policy, had come to the conclusion, that the rebel States had better be permitted to go and the Union be given up.

This, perhaps, was the darkest hour of our cause, darker than the days of Bull Run. But fortunately the intelligence and patriotism of the people prevailed. They did not stop to analyze this subtle reasoning. They knew it was false, they knew if any state was permitted to secede, it would be but the beginning of an era of anarchy; and before the rebel guns had ceased firing upon Sumter, a nation was springing to arms; the Union was to be saved; secession, with all its assumptions, was to die—and this danger passed away.

But now, my friends, shall we transfer the Government of our State, to the party, who even at this day when secession is dead, takes up its rotten carcass, the resolutions of '98, and puts them on their banner?

The rebels had large expectations of foreign intervention. They counted much in this connection, upon the aid of their monarch, whom they were pleased to designate king cotton. This monarch, however, proved to be of less consequence than they supposed. But they were making war in behalf of an aristocratic institution; and any dismemberment of the Republic, would be to the injury of Democratic institutions. These considerations gave the rebels the ear of

the crowned heads, and ruling classes of Europe. This was early, by words and deeds, manifested. There was an indecent haste to recognize the rebels as belligerents, which gave them a status and opened the way for the pirate ships and blockade runners. But formal recognition was not yet given. In the gloomy days of 1862, when McClellan had been disastrously driven from before Richmond, when the second Bull Run defeat had occurred, and the rebels were again before Washington and invading Maryland, there were threatening rumors of foreign intervention. France and England were then in consultation on this subject. But recognition did not come. We have now, from what I regard as the highest authority on this point, the reason it did not come. Mr. Stephens, in his letter to Semmes, written last year, says, it was prevented by Mr. Lincoln's proclamation of emancipation. Mr. Stephens was then Vice President of the Confederacy, and doubtless learned what he said on this point from the rebel emissaries in foreign countries. Besides the circumstances of the time, give probability to this statement.

While the aristocratic classes in England and other foreign countries were in sympathy with the rebellion, the working classes and the liberals of those countries were not; and in England these had so much power that the Government was bound to respect their opinions. But the labors of the eminent liberal leaders were much paralyzed by the fact, that our Government had steadily refused to emancipate the slaves. So that the rebel emissaries could plausibly say, as they did, that slavery was not involved in the contest, that the United States were no more for freedom than the Confederacy. In those days of our disasters, these arguments were being pressed with great effect. Fortunately for the country, Mr. Lincoln came to the relief of our liberal friends abroad; the proclamation of emancipation was issued, and the danger of foreign intervention passed away. Much in this relation do we owe to Abraham Lincoln. Much, very much also, to our own first citizen, Salmon P. Chase. Nor should we

ever forget the debt of gratitude we are under to those noble and liberal Englishmen, Mill, Cobden, Bright and others. Doubtless they will feel that we have fully paid it, if we now reconstruct upon the basis of justice and equal rights.

And now, my friends, shall we give over the Government of our State to that party, which so violently opposed the proclamation and the whole policy of emancipation, and who, even now, would justify what they did in this respect, at that time?

We have already seen that the seceding States were, in the main, thoroughly united in the prosecution of the war, and we have seen the cause of this unity.

They had also counted much upon divisions at the North. We have seen that Sumter silenced these. But the leaders of the party of the North, which sympathized with the rebels, were only silenced; they were not converted. For a time they kept quiet, but with the early disasters of the war, and the general ill fortune attending our cause at that time, they became emboldened. Taking advantage of the discontent of the loyal at the mismanagement of affairs, they sought to depress the hopes of the people of final success, and to induce them to abandon the cause. You have not forgotten how, day after day, Mr. Vallandigham and his compeers, were taunting loyal people with the want of success; how they proclaimed endlessly that the South could never be conquered, and that war was inevitable and final dissolution. In those gloomy days their words were not without effect.

There are always faint-hearted men, who grow weary in any cause, and fall out by the way; there are also numbers of persons who abandon an administration which they have helped to put in, because they do not get the rewards they expected. Such as these readily attached themselves to the opposition party, and it was becoming somewhat formidable. In a military point of view, the rebellion culminated at Gettysburg; from that day dates its decadence.

So in a political point of view, it culminated in the same year, two years since, in the contest of Vallandigham for the Governorship of this State. Then was the greatest effort put forth to divide the North. In the language of Maury, an emissary of the rebellion in Europe, Vallandigham was waiting and watching over the border, "pledged, if elected Governor of Ohio, to array it against Lincoln and the war." But happily, that event never took place, and the redoubtable Vallandigham was left waiting and watching. I will not soon forget that election day in Cincinnati. It was unlike any other I ever witnessed. The day itself was calm and pleasant; business had voluntarily ceased; the streets had a Sabbath like quietness; there was no noise or confusion at the polls; the number in attendance was less than usual; no military whatever. I felt at first that there was to be a small vote, and it caused me some apprehension, but I was soon undeceived. A steady stream of voters poured along; they formed themselves into line of their own motion. Each awaited his turn; holding his ballot securely in his hand, with steady step and firm countenance, such as men put on when engaged in solemn business, he approached the ballot-box, deposited his ballot and passed on in silence and thoughtfulness to his home. It was indeed a solemn thing. It was a vote for the draft and for taxes. Many a noble son of Ohio, who on that day cast his vote for his country, has since then given up his life for the same great cause.

But with that election, the hope of dividing the country passed away forever; and the capacity of the people for self government was nobly vindicated. My friends, Mr. Vallandigham is not now a candidate, but his man is, the man who voted for him then. Will you reverse that election this fall?

In the contemplation of these great dangers, and others that might be mentioned, through which we have happily passed, let us rejoice that the war has not indeed been a failure, that the rebellion is suppressed,

and that the national authority is every where re-established.

But, my friends, our work is only half done; reconstruction remains.

Force produces physical unity; this is not the basis of our institutions. We may not, with safety to ourselves, maintain permanently military control of the rebel States. Pro-consular Governments are alien to our system. Yet the rebels have invoked the war power; it is not for them to say when or how we shall lay it aside. We may not do this until the public safety permits. War powers are the defensive armor of a free people, to be put on in times of danger, but to be laid aside as soon as the danger is past. All patriots must desire that the eleven seceding States, shall, as speedily as the public safety will permit, become in fact as well as in form, members of our common body politic, equal in right with the other members and clothed with the powers of self-government. How this shall be done is the problem of our politics, that now presses for solution.

In seeking this solution, we must carefully consider the character and condition of the people of these States. The distinction, known in these States, between original secessionists and original Unionists is thought to be of value in this connection. But this has been greatly over estimated. Indeed, many of the original secessionists accept the results of the war more cheerfully than many original Unionists. In the recent canvass in Kentucky as to the Constitutional Amendment, secessionist Magoffin supported it and Unionist Garret Davis opposed it. Nor is this strange. It is a part of the constitution of our nature to pass readily from extreme to extreme. Besides, the original Unionists do not feel the same degree of guilt, and are loth to pay, with the secessionists, the common penalty of the liberation of their slaves. Still this distinction may have some value. Again, the distinction between the rich and the poor is put forward as important in this connection, the former being looked upon as the

authors of the rebellion, the latter as their dupes. Yet this distinction has not much value. The poor whites of the South accept with even more reluctance than the rich, the emancipation of the slaves. The spectre of negro equality haunts them. Were I compelled to give the colored people into the control of either of these, I would prefer the master.

The fact is, and we might as well look it squarely in the face, with a few unimportant exceptions, the Southern whites yield sullenly and reluctantly to the decision of the sword. They are conquered, not converted.

Do not mistake me; I ask of them no unmanly self-abasement. I would not have them otherwise than proud of the prowess they have exhibited in the contest. But before I would give them a voice in the affairs of the nation, a vote to control your and my concerns, I would have a guaranty that this voice and this vote would be directed to the common good, that these would not be merely new and more dangerous weapons in their hands, to carry on the war against the Union.

Is it wrong that I should require this guaranty? Is it contrary to the laws of human conduct, that these mortified and embittered and unconverted men should use their voices in the national councils, rather in the direction of their desires and special interests than in behalf of the common good? For example, many of these men are largely interested in the rebel debt. Can it be expected that they will vote for the repudiation of this debt and the payment of the National debt, incurred in their coercion? Nay, would not their fifty-eight votes in the House of Representatives, almost one-fourth of the whole number, and their twenty-two in the Senate, nearly one-third of the whole number, be a constant quantity for repudiation. As Mr. Mill says, they would be the only Congressmen who could in their own estimation honestly vote for repudiation. But it is not necessary that there should be a direct vote to this effect. It is enough to vote against taxation; and how easily a purpose of this kind could be

concealed, under the guise of objecting to this or that form of taxation, while pretending to be in favor of some sort of taxation? And now, my friends, this is a matter of the gravest concern. Our free institutions cannot permanently survive so gross a breach of faith, as the repudiation of our war debt. I would not give these eleven States a vote in the National councils, unless I had a guaranty that this vote would not be for this breach of faith.

Again. These rebel men have been accustomed all the days of their lives to eat their bread by the sweat of another's face; to make this condition of things perpetual, they have imbrued their hands in a brother's blood. They have failed; henceforth they must share the common doom of the sons of Adam. They must work. The slave is free; and the immortal proclamation pledges the public faith, by the most sacred of obligations, to the maintenance of his freedom. Now may we rationally expect these men to labor faithfully, to make this pledge good? Yet the Republic can not permanently survive the breach of this plighted faith. I would not give them power in this matter, until I had a guaranty that this power would not be used for this breach of faith. But what then? will you forever exclude these States? If not, what guaranties do you want? Upon what conditions would you admit them? Fortunately these questions can be satisfactorily answered.

At the commencement of this war, it was a common declaration of those who were in sympathy with the rebels, that the rebellion could not be put down; that history did not furnish an example of eight or ten millions of people determined on independence being conquered. These opinions were generally held by the rulers of Europe. But there was one important element left out of the calculation, namely, nearly *one half of the population of the rebel States, were the determined enemies of the rebellion, and this half constituted the laboring class.* This half neutralized, in the long run, the other half.

While I am not one of those who place the bravery of the negro soldiers above that of the white, it is a fact which will hardly be denied, that but for the opposition of the entire negro population to the rebel cause, we could scarcely have succeeded; surely, had this force been added to the rebel side, we could not. Mr. Lincoln's proclamation of emancipation, derided at the time as a Pope's Bull against the comet, was the death blow of the rebellion.

This loyal half still remain; they, who never in a single instance failed the Union cause, are now as loyal and faithful as ever. We have seen that this half of the Southern population neutralized the other half in the war. I would have it continue this good work. I would so reconstruct the Southern States, that while I gave to the disloyal half their full equality before the law, I would paralyze their disloyal purposes by giving a like equality to the loyal half. What wrong is there in this? I give to the men who, for four years have been laboring to destroy the nation full rights —the same which you and I have. The only condition imposed, is, that their loyal fellow citizens shall have the same rights, neither more nor less. This solution of the problem of reconstruction is in full harmony with the representative principle and all our institutions. It will in a brief time remove pro-consular governments, and restore the normal condition of all the States. The country can then rest satisfied that it has a full guaranty against any efforts of the rebels to do injury, under a restored government. This solution introduces no new element, no new principle into our Government. It is but the complete application of the principles of our fathers, set forth in the declaration of independence.

The exception which they reluctantly permitted against the negro is removed. It gives representation to those whom we subject to drafts and taxes It rests upon the golden rule of right. It is but doing unto others what we would that they should do unto us.

Why shall it not be adopted? And here the false theory

of State rights is again thrust forward, *by certain parties*, in the precise same sense, and for the same purpose with which it was introduced at the beginning of the war, to support the proposition that the Government had no right to defend itself against rebellion. *Then* the Government had no power to resist those who sought its life! *now* these being captured, it has no power to require them to give bonds to keep the peace! Here again the true relation of things is perverted. Grant indeed, not Lee, has surrendered; the Union forces, not the rebels, have been disarmed.

It is no part of my present purpose to elaborate the argument, establishing the power of the Government to impose conditions, looking to the public safety, upon the rebels. If it has no power to do this, it had no power to make the war. The one follows from the other. The rebels well knew, when they appealed to the tribunal of the sword, what the judgment must be, if the decision should be adverse to them. By the universal laws of war, the conquering power may impose such conditions of settlement, looking to its own safety and welfare, as it pleases; only these must not be in violation of the laws of humanity. This principle clearly gives the Government power to adopt the plan of reconstruction proposed. Surely it is not at variance with the laws of humanity. This power also, may be derived from the present condition of the rebel States, and the peculiar structure of our Government. But it is unnecessary to elaborate this point. Happily in their zeal to divide the Union party, and not because they really approved of it, the parties above alluded to, the so-called Democracy, have given an eager assent to President Johnson's policy of reconstruction; and thereby have estopped themselves from declaring this plan of reconstruction unconstitutional.

President Johnson ignores the State authorities, and calls upon a part of the population, whom he designates to come forward and reconstruct the State Governments. This the Democracy approve.

Now there is no escaping the proposition, that the power which authorizes the President to disregard the Constitutions of the rebel States, and to confide the work of reconstruction to such part of their inhabitants as he may elect, gives him plenary authority in the premises. The State Constitutions are a complete rule or they are no rule. If the President may disregard one provision, he may disregard all. If he may confide reconstruction to the loyal whites, he may also to the loyal blacks. I repeat there is no escaping this argument; words will not add to its force. Then by the agreement of all parties, there is no Constitutional difficulty in the way of this plan of reconstruction. What other objection is there? But in this connection permit a word in relation to the President's policy. While I would have pursued a different one; while I would have called upon all the loyal people, irrespective of color, to come forward and reconstruct their State Governments, I have no quarrel with the President; whatever he may do in the future, he is entitled to the lasting gratitude of anti-slavery men, for the firmness with which he has insisted upon the abolition of slavery. In this respect he has gone further than Mr. Lincoln, who proposed to leave the effect of his proclamation to the Courts. I would have been glad if President Johnson had gone further. But it would have been an advance step then, and perhaps there was wisdom in the policy of giving the rebels opportunity to do of their own motion, what they ought to do. If they fail, the remedy is with Congress. As an experiment the policy of Mr. Johnson may serve the cause of enfranchisement in the same way that Mr. Lincoln's early policy of not touching slavery, served in the long run the cause of emancipation. It may the better prepare the minds of the people for enfranchisement.

But to return: what other objection is there to the plan of reconstruction under consideration?

It is said there is a deeply rooted antagonism between the black and white races, forbidding their remaining together

in the same country. If this is a fact, it is a very sad one; but it would not furnish an objection, specially against the plan of reconstruction under consideration. It would seem to apply equally to all plans. It is rather the statement of an insurmountable difficulty, than the solution of one. It is as if one were to complain of the light of the sun, or of the alternation of the seasons. For this is not a question of introducing four millions of negroes here; they are here now, and all plans that have ever been suggested for effecting their separation are purely chimerical. They cannot be separated, and yet, the declaration is, they cannot remain together. The case would seem to be hopeless. But happily this declaration is not true. The prejudices between these races are not different in character from other prejudices. There are prejudices between Irishmen and Englishmen; between Catholics and Protestants; between Christians and Jews. These have often been very violent and wars have grown out of them. Not, however, because of their differences, but because one race sought to subordinate to itself another, or one sect sought to impose its tenets upon another. Peace prevailed when each race and each sect attended to its own business. When our fathers framed our Constitution, they understood these principles and applied them. They restrained the different races and sects, by securing to each absolute equality before the law. They, however, excepted the negro race, it being then in slavery, and they seeing no way of securing its freedom, permitted this violation of their principles to remain. But now we have the opportunity of applying these principles to this race and of thus removing the last exception. I would make the application. Prejudice yields to power and interest. The votes of the black men will be too valuable to be slighted.

It is said, however, that the blacks could only vote at the point of the bayonet, that the Southern whites would not otherwise permit them. Then the rebellion is not subdued; we have a truce, not lasting peace. If this is the case, the sooner we know it the better; at least it were better to know it before we disband our armies.

But I do not believe this; doubtless the masters are averse to the negroes voting; not any more however, than they were to their freedom. They profess to acquiesce in the latter, they will also in the former. The rebels are not now in a condition to fight the United States and the freedmen at the polls. And in a short time the soldiers of the Government can be safely removed. Every day the negro will acquire knowledge and power, all of which will be respected at the polls. This thing of fighting is an easy matter to the armed dominant party over his unarmed subordinate. But between equals, it is a very different affair. Men count the cost. The capacity to do this is attained at a very early age. My son, said a father the other day in my hearing to his little boy in his first breeches, "why did'nt you strike Sam?" "Well, father," replied the urchin, "would'nt he have hit me back?" In those rebel States in which the negroes are the more numerous, the whites will be slow to provoke a contest. They will, everywhere, rather endeavor in a different way to control the negro votes; they will seek them by kindness. Such is human nature. I expect to see the day when a Southern Democrat, will be seen "carrying" arm in arm to the polls, two negro voters. For the white race has no monopoly of worthless men. They belong to all races.

Again, it is objected, that the Southern negro is ignorant and unfit to vote. He seems to have been intelligent enough to be loyal, which was more than his master was. But I do not deny the ignorance; their condition of slavery forbids that it could be otherwise. Yet they share this ignorance in common with the poor whites; and I would be willing to apply to both these classes an educational test. Still I would not recommend this. Freedom is the school in which freemen are to be taught, and the ballot-box is a wonderful educator.

We cannot too constantly keep in our minds, that this is not a question as to the policy of introducing into our country four millions of ignorant negroes. They are here, are to remain with us in the indefinite future. We cannot escape

if we desired, their influence upon our civilization. Were it possible for them to remain with us, and yet be so excluded from us, that they could have no influence upon the common welfare, then we might selfishly put them into such imaginary condition, and relieve ourselves of all further trouble concerning them. But we cannot do this. Their force must enter as one of the constituent elements in the formation of our American civilization. Let no one make the mistake of supposing that we escaped their influence when they were in slavery. Far from it. What that influence was, Jefferson tells us: "The whole commerce between master and slave is, a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submission, on the other. Our children see this and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal. The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives a loose rein to the worst of passions, and thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances." Who would desire a continuation of this influence, or of an influence approximating it? As the force of the negro must enter into the formation of our civilization, it is to the interest of the white man not less than of the black man, that this force should be for good. It cannot be, however, unless the negro is moral, intelligent and industrious. How can we give him these desirable characteristics? We have only to consider the conditions under which white men have become moral, intelligent, and industrious, and apply these to the black man.

Our proposition thus becomes very simple; we must educate him and place before him the rewards of good conduct and the penalties of bad conduct. We must give give him entire equality before the law and all these things will follow. Let not the law be a respecter of persons. The humbler the man the greater the

necessity that the law should not oppress him. The rich and great can take care of themselves. With all the opportunities of equal laws, the poor man's lot is hard enough. He requires the protection of the law and the self respect which an equality of right before the law engenders. In a country where equality is the rule, we cannot have an exception founded on caste. The ballot is here the evidence of manhood; when we deny it to a race we at once degrade that race in the respect of others, and what is of greater consequence, in its own respect. Every man, the humbler he is the more, requires the right of suffrage for his protection. And the negro, as the most unprotected of all, needs it most of all. We must educate him, and give him the condition of self-respect, if we would have his influence for good upon our civilization.

But while we thus see the necessity of giving to the negro equality before the law, even upon the assumption that his presence is a necessary evil, let us not forget that this is indeed far from the truth. We need his labor in the South and we need the protection of his ballot against the ballot of his former traitorous master.

And further, if we educate him and place him in a position in which he will respect himself, we may expect the most gratifying results to the common good. In an economic view this is a matter of the greatest moment. The increased production of an intelligent, self-respecting and industrious population can hardly be estimated. In the South thrift will take the place of waste; voluntary labor directed by an enlightened self-interest will take the place of compulsory labor directed by the lash; provident abstinence will save for a reserved fund, that which has heretofore been lost in careless expenditure. Fixed capital will thus arise; towns will spring up; the industrial arts will be cultivated; and prosperity and wealth will abound where want and poverty have prevailed. That rich southern soil with its generous climate, is a mine of untold wealth. It needs but the hand of free industry to bring it forth. All this would greatly

contribute to lightening the load of our debt. These grateful people would gladly aid in the payment of the ransom for their redemption.

My friends, every consideration which ought to influence human conduct, requires that the ballot should be given to the black man.

The protection of the black man himself requires it; gratitude for his devoted loyalty requires it; the protection of our civilization from the influence of a degraded and barbarous element requires it; the protection of ourselves from the insidious rebel ballot requires it; the speedy restoration of the rebel states to their proper relation to the General Government requires it; the fundamental principles of our Government require it; the Golden Rule of our most holy religion commanding us to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us, requires it. Can we withhold it?

My friends, when I leave here should you think of what I have said, remember that I have not proposed to take anything from any man,—no, not even from the rebels. I indeed propose to them, their full restoration to all the rights of citizenship, as fully as we possess them our selves. I seek nothing which need be offensive to them; nothing which is unknown to their own history. In their better days, before slavery became their absorbing thought, free black men voted in many if not all the Southern States. While we are in the way of restoring the forfeited rights of the rebels, let us give to the loyal black man, now free, his ancient right to vote—a gift that costs no one anything, but the withholding of which from him makes him poor indeed. Nay, it is for the interest of the South far more than of the North that this should be done. There is no safety between absolute slavery and absolute freedom. If this plan of reconstruction is adopted a great and happy and prosperous future is open to the South. But if the contrary course is taken; if the negro is to continue a poor and despised being, with no

rights which a white man is bound to respect; if he is to be the subject of insult and outrage, with no other protection than the strength of his arm,—then indeed the future of the South is very dark. The negro will soon know too much, know his strength too well, to submit.

Our fathers, yielding to the embarrassments of the day permitted negro slavery to remain, with the expectation, it is true, that it would soon pass away. Alas, what a fearful mistake! This action has been the cause of all our woe. Shall we repeat this mistake? Shall we learn no lesson from this sad experience? God grant that it may be otherwise. Let us catch the inspiration of our Martyr President at the field of Gettysburgh; let us join in his prayer "That this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that Government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

APPENDIX.

LETTER FROM JOHN STUART MILL.

BLACKHEATH PARK, KENT., SEPT. 1, 1865

DEAR SIR—I am sincerely obliged to you for giving me an opportunity of reading the letter of Gen. Cox, and your excellent paper in reply.

You ask me for an opinion. I should hesitate very long before obtruding upon any American, and still more upon the American public, any mere opinion of mine respecting their internal concerns. But it is the concern of all mankind, almost as much as of the United States, that the conquests achieved by your great and arduous struggle should not be,in the very hour of victory, carelessly flung away; and the opinion which you do me the honor to ask, is one which I share with so many of the noblest and wisest Americans, that I need have the less scruple in expressing it.

It is certainly some gain to the negroes, and to the principle of freedom, that they have been made even nominally free, I do not pretend that it is nothing, that they can no longer legally be bought and sold. But this is about the amount of all they will have gained, if the power of legislation over them is handed over once more to their old masters, and to the mean whites by whom they are despised as much, and probably hated more, than even by their masters, and who have been fighting these four years to retain them enslaved. If it were not for your State institutions, the case would not be so pressing; for those who have made them free could keep them so. But, once the war-power laid down, and the regular course of State government restored, what is to prevent a State Legislature, chosen by their enemies, from making laws under which, unless they resist by force, they will have as little the control of their own actions, as little protection for life, honor, and property, will, in short, be, except in a few of the outward incidents of slavery, almost as much slaves as before? To bring this about, it would not even be necessary to enact new laws. It would suffice to leave the old ones unrepealed,

by which the testimony of a negro can not be received against a white. Nay, even were these laws abrogated, nothing more would be needed than partiality and prejudice in the white courts of justice. And would it be consistent with ordinary human nature that such partiality and prejudice should not exist? All this is so evident, that even the candidate to whose letter you so ably replied, is quite aware of it, and can suggest no means of averting the evil, except what I agree with you in regarding as the chimerical project, of effecting a local separation between the two races, excluding the negroes from the jurisdiction of the States and giving them a territorial government apart. It is not to be believed that the President or Congress will entertain such a scheme as this seriously. If, then, they allow the Southern States to reorganize themselves, and resume all their constitutional rights, without negro suffrage, what is to be done? To abandon the negroes to the tender mercies of those from whom, at so terrible a cost, you have so lately rescued them? No party or set of men in the free States are so shameless as to propose this combined turpitude and imbecility. But the freedom of the negroes and the self-government of the Southern States, as at present constituted, cannot co-exist; and if it is determined that, come what will, the former shall be a reality, it must be intended that the latter should be a mere pretense. A censorship will have to be exercised over all the acts, both legislative and administrative, of the State governments; the Federal authorities will, by military coercion, prevent all proceedings calculated to interfere with that equality of civil rights which they are bound by every consideration both of duty and of interest, to secure to the freed race. And this military dictatorship will have to be continued for a very great length of time; for it is speaking within bounds to say two generations must elapse before the habits and feelings engendered by slavery give place to new ones; before the stain which the position of slave-master burns into the very souls of the privileged population can be expected to fade out.

This is the state of things which the policy now acted upon by the Federal Government leads to; but I have too high an opinion of the intentions and feelings of the President, and the practical good sense and determination of the American people, to believe that such a policy will be persevered in. It would be nothing less than electing to rule tyrannically over the whole

Southern population, in order to avoid depriving the white half of that population of the power of tyrannizing over the black half.

Instead of restoring to the States lately in Rebellion a nominal self-Government which, unless you are willing to sacrifice all that has been gained by four years of civil war, can not be suffered to be real, would it not be better to make the self-government real, but to grant it only to a mixed community, in which the population who have been corrupted by vicious institutions will be neutralized by black citizens and white immigrants from the North?

And what is the hindrance to this in the minds of the President and his Cabinet? Is it scruples about legality? To be scrupulous about exceeding his lawful powers, well becomes the first magistrate of a free people. But in this case the scruple seems wholly out of place. We are told that the rebel States must be assumed never to have been out of the Union, and therefore to be unconditionally entitled to all their original liberties and powers the moment they condescend to accept them. Reason would say, on the contrary, that by declaring themselves independent of the Union, they could not indeed, divest themselves of its obligations, but certainly forfeited its privileges. A state of civil war suspends all legal rights, and all social compacts, between the combatants. Except under the terms of a capitulation, defeated rebels have no rights but the universal ones of humanity. The Southern people, their lives, bodies and estates, were by the issue of the war, placed at the discretion of their conquerors; but of conquerors whom both the general law of right, and the special principles of their own social and political institutions, forbid to exercise permanent dominion over any human beings as subjects, or on any other footing than that of equal citizenship. It would, however, be on the part of the free States a generosity partaking of silliness, were they to give back to their bitter enemies not only power to govern themselves, and the negroes within their limits, but, (through representatives in Congress,) to govern the free States too, without first exacting such changes in the structure of Southern society as will render such a relation between them and the free states rational and safe. If you have not a right to do this, you had not a right to impose the abolition of slavery. Consider what an element you are going once more to admit into

the supreme government of the Union. Think of this one thing—it is but one of many, every Southern member of Congress elected without negro suffrage is a sure vote for that blackest and most disgraceful breach of faith, which would brand American democracy and popular government itself with a mark that would endure for generations—the repudiation of the war debt. The Southern representatives, in fact would be the only members of Congress who could honestly vote for this; since, to their minds, unless the confederate debt is recognized too, it would seem only equal justice. This is of itself a sufficient reason why no community composed exclusively or principally of those who have been engaged in the rebellion, is fit to have a voice in Congress. Of course the States have to be readmitted: to keep them out and govern them as subjects, would be in contradiction to all the principles of the American or any other free constitution. But the future history of America, perhaps for ages to come, depends, (I cannot but think,) upon your requiring them, before admission, to give guarantees to freedom, by admixture with fellow-citizens whose interests and feelings are in unison with justice, and with the principles of the free States. Migration from the North will do this in time and in part, but only negro suffrage can do it sufficiently.

I have no objection to requiring, as a condition of the suffrage, education up to the point of reading and writing; but upon condition that this shall be required equally from the whites. The poor whites of the South are understood to need education quite as much as the negroes, and are certainly quite as unfit for the exercise of the suffrage without it.

I am, dear sir, yours, very sincerely. J. S. MILL.

Hon. Judge Dickson, &c.

REVIEW OF GEN. COX'S LETTER.

On the 20th day of July, 1865, General Cox, the candidate of the Union party for Governor of Ohio, inaugurated his canvass, by a letter to certain citizens of the town of Oberlin, in that State, in relation to the white and black races, with special reference to the question of negro suffrage. Of this letter the following is a review.

Editors Cincinnati Commercial:

WHATEVER we may think of the views of Gen. Cox, all must admire the soldierly frankness of his letter. The Union Convention purposely omitted an expression of opinion on the question of negro suffrage. The "overthrow and eradication" of slavery was felt to be the paramount consideration of the hour; and no expression of opinion which might embarrass or prevent this consummation was permitted. For this reason negro suffrage was subordinated to the adoption of the Constitutional Amendment. Whatever else may happen, the fundamental law of the land must be on the side of freedom; the fountain must be pure. All were in favor of the Constitutional Amendment; but not all, of negro suffrage. Hence the latter was excluded from the platform. From my observation, I am satisfied a large majority of the Convention were of the opinion that negro suffrage would and ought to come; a respectable minority thought now was the opportune moment for securing it at the South; and a very small minority were altogether opposed to it. But all waived an expression of opinion on this subject, to the end that the integrity of the Union party might be preserved, and the adoption of the Constitutional Amendment thereby secured.

So, according to the action of the Convention, a man might be a member of the Union party, and in good standing, whether he was for or against negro suffrage; and the election of the Union ticket would decide nothing on that question.

Thus stood the matter before Gen. Cox's letter. Does it change the position? I apprehend not. He does not undertake to make a supplement to the platform, but especially disclaims any such purpose. He does not speak in his representative capacity, but gives his private opinions, and, at the same time, declares his readiness, if a contrary policy is adopted, to give it his hearty concurrence.

His election will, therefore, so far as his action is concerned, neither speak for nor against negro suffrage; and he may be voted for with entire propriety by the advocate of either side of this question.

I have felt it proper to premise thus, before proceeding to the consideration of the opinions expressed in the letter. I shall support the platform of the Convention, and most cordially labor for the election of Gen. Cox, and will conform, when I may differ from him, to the spirit of the proposition, "That adherence to a party platform does not exclude freedom of opinion or of discussion upon matters not included in it, though it does imply *that such discussion should be a free and friendly interchange of views, with the object of throwing all possible light upon subjects which may, sooner or later, become topics of importance, and upon which we may have to form a definite policy.*"*

Gen. Cox opposes negro suffrage upon the single ground that the white man and the black man cannot live in the same community. The effect of the war has developed "a rooted antagonism which makes their permanent fusion in one political community an absolute impossibility." "The only real solution which I can see is the peaceable separation of the races." "What encouragement have we that success will attend a forced political fusion of bitterly hostile races from the antipodes of the human family?" "It seems manifest to me that there could be no political unity, but rather a strife for the mastery, *in which the one or the other would go to the wall.*"*

I remark, in the first place, that all this is, and always has been, the Southern theory on this subject, the ground of their action in behalf of slavery and secession. Long ago Calhoun said, "To maintain the existing relations [1837] between the the two races inhabiting that section of the Union [South] is indispensable to the peace and happiness of both. It cannot be

*Gen. Cox's letter.

subverted *without drenching the country in blood, and extirpating one or the other of the races.*" [Speech in the Senate, Feb. 6, 1837.] So there is a substantial agreement between Gen. Cox and Calhoun on the point that the white and black men of the South cannot live together, except on the condition of the slavery of the latter. From these premises, widely divergent conclusions are reached by these gentlemen; but once admit his premises, and you are fortunate indeed if you escape the toils of Calhoun's subtle logic. Perhaps, if Gen. Cox's views are sound, it would have been the part of wisdom, as well as of humanity, for us to have paused before we freed the slave, and exposed him to these perils; at least until we had found some feasible scheme for accomplishing his separation. Surely the one suggested by Gen. Cox is not of this character. If he means, that, in the course of ages and in the progress of events, the American negro will ultimately find his home around the Gulf, I have, on this point, no controversy with him. But this is not his meaning; he looks to more violent action; he designates particular portions of the South to be set apart for the negro, where he may be induced to go. The general is silent as to how the white man is to be removed; and he is careful to put this hypothetically. He felt that the ground was unsteady under him. That some two millions of whites may be removed from their homes, and some four millions of blacks led into them, is a proposition that needs only to be stated to be condemned.

But again, if there is a "rooted antagonism" which necessitates the separation of the Southern white and black, why not of the Southern and Northern white? Gen. Cox will hardly say that the master hates his slave more than he hates the "Yankee;" and if separation is the remedy for the former, why not for the latter antagonism? And this is the remedy which the Southern doctor prescribes! General, your argument proves too much.

But I deny the existence of any such "rooted antagonism," and the whole philosophy founded upon it. It is all false. Gen. Cox is a Northern man, of Northern lineage and association, with no opportunity to observe the master and the slave, except that furnished by a four year's experience amid the clash of arms, and the fierce conflict of angry passions. This was not a favorable one for studying "rooted antagonisms." The phenomena of the fevered patient are not the same as those of the

well man. But I speak from a wider observation, from the opportunities furnished by a life's association with the Southern people, from knowing them in peace and in war. Persons accustomed to seeing the white child clinging with fond embrace to its black "mammy," in preference to its own white mother, and to see the white and black children playing together, wholly unconscious of any inequality, will be slow to believe that there is any natural repulsion or prejudice between them. Nor will this scepticism be removed by observing these parties, in their mature life, bearing towards one another the most intimate relations, unconscious that there is any natural repulsion.

I do not deny that there may be acquired prejudices. Indeed, man is a bundle of prejudices. Commencing life the feeblest of beings, his prejudices are at first in favor of his parents, and against all others. His parents are his gods, and he wonders, and is pained, to find that they are not so to others. He grows apace, and his knowledge widens: he now thinks the narrow circle of his neighborhood the centre of the world, and pities and despises all the rest. With his widening knowledge his affections embrace his whole country; but he is a very mature man who can truly say and feel that "our country is the world; our countrymen all mankind." Nor are prejudices confined to country and race. We have prejudices as to opinions—religious, political, moral, social. The etymology of the word indicates the true nature of prejudice. It means the forming of opinions before examination, pre-judgement. Mankind are constantly doing this; the exception is when they do otherwise. The interest of the slaveholder is that his slave should continue to be his slave; his prejudice is in the line of his interest; he says that the master and slave cannot live together except in that relationship because it is his interest to say that; he says shat the slave will not work except as a slave, because it is his interest to say that; he says the slave is of an inferior race, because it is his interest to say that. Accustomed to the black man being a slave, he views that as his normal condition, and is averse to his being raised to a higher. The Southern white man's interest and his education prejudice him against, not the negro, but the negro's freedom. Gen. Cox says they do not amalgamate with the white race. The indications South would hardly support this proposition. But I will not deny it; nor

do I think they should. I may be mistaken, yet I think Nature has indicated that these should be separate races. But shall this prevent them remaining together? If so, how should the Jew be treated? He does not amalgamate with the Christian. Shall he be put into a separate country? "Becanse," said Mr. Lincoln, "I dont want a negro as my wife, must I have her as my slave?" or must I exclude her from the country in which I live?

As the conclusion of all this, I claim that the prejudices between the white and black man of the South are of the same nature as other prejudices, and should have the same treatment. And here we have for our guidance the example of our fathers, in their action, when they framed tne Government under which we are living.

I can imagine some one of Gen. Cox's mode of reasoning, addressing the convention which formed our Constitution, thus:—

"I am of the opinion, that, in framing this instrument, we should learn wisdom from the past. History teaches us that the antagonisms of race cannot be overcome, particularly when they are deepened by differences in religious faith. We have seen, that, for ages past, the Jew has refused to amalgamate with other nations—he insists on preserving his own creed and nationality; that centuries 'of common government and political union have not been able to obliterate the distinctions, and even the instinctive enmity* between him and the Christians; that his presence in Europe has, in almost every country, resulted in bloody strife, the end of which was that one or the other party went to the wall. And, furthermore, Mr, President, history teaches us that there is a 'deeply rooted antagonism' between the Catholic and the Protestant; that they often, and in some countries altogether, refuse to amalgamate; that, when they have been for centuries together in the same country, they have burnt one another at the stake, and drenched the land in blood, until sometimes one and sometimes the other has gone to the wall. See the bloody scenes in Holland, Germady, France, and England. Mr. President, I believe in these great 'philosophic truths;' 'In the life of nations, that union which is exterior and visible, the unity of name and of government, although important, is by no means the first in importance, the most real, or that

*Gen. Cox's letter.

which makes, indeed, one nation. There is a unity which is deeper and more powerful,—it is that which results not merely from identity of government and of destiny, *but from the homogeneity of social elements, from the likeness of institutions, of manners, of ideas, of tongues; the unity which resides in the men themselves* whom society assembles, and not in the forms of their association; in short, the moral unity (*l'unite morale*) which is far more important than political unity. and which is the only solid foundation for the latter.* Believing these truths, and in the absolute necessity for the 'homogeneity' of our people, we can not, we must not, mix together the Jew, the Protestant, and the Catholic. I believe that such a course would rather be like the decisions in that outer darkness, of which Milton speaks, where—

'Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more embroils the fray.'*

I would, therefore, propose this solution of the difficulty: 'A peaceable separation of these races and religionists on the soil where they now live.' I would give, say the New-England States and New York to the Protestants, New Jersey and Pennsylvania to the Jews, and the rest to the Catholics. Though I am not specially desirous for this particular adjustment of the territory: any other that can be agreed upon would equally suit me."

In all candour, upon the reasoning of Gen. Cox, could this speech have been answered? And, upon this reasoning, if our fathers had acted wisely, would they not have been compelled to make a separation as suggested, or to expel two of the parties from the country?

Fortunately our fathers had read history differently, and understood human nature better.

The wars of races and of religions grew not out of their differences, but out of the intolerant spirit which sought to force upon another a religion which he did not believe; or out of the spirit of domination, which sought the subordination of one race to another. This being the case, the remedy was obvious. It was simply to restrain the intolerant and the aggressive by securing to all races and religionists absolute equality before the law.

Religiously, this was secured by guaranteeing to each one the freedom to worship God in his own way; politically, by giving

*Gen. Cox's letter.

to every man an equal vote. Prejudice is silent before power or interest. "A" is a young man, a bigoted Protestant Christian, if you please; his education has been narrow; he hates the Catholic; he would like to abuse him, particularly the Catholic Irishman; but he is also ambitious, he desires preferment, and he remembers that the Catholic can vote, and he is *silent*. Time passes on; he has a wider observation; he becomes acquainted with Catholics who are good men; he reflects that his Protestantism is but an accident; that, had he been born of Catholic parents, he would have been a Catholic; and he learns that what he supposed was holy wrath is only bigotry: he is not less a Protestant but more catholic. Thus are the prejudices of race and religion brushed away before the unseen but felt influences of our Government.

Now I would apply to the solution of the Southern problem the principles of our fathers. I have said they made all races equal before the law. This was not strictly true. They excepted the negro race. It was then in slavery; and our fathers, seeing no mode of securing its freedom, permitted this violation of their principles to remain. We have reaped the bitter fruits of this action; but the negro is now free, and the opportunity is given us to apply to him the principles of our fathers, and thus remove the last exception. Shall we do it? If we do not we have not the excuse our fathers had; and the greater will be our punishment in the future.

We have seen how the prejudices between Jew and Christian, Protestant and Catholic, have been softened down by the operation of the sublime principles of our Government. Such will be the result of extending those principles to the black race. The negro will feel, having entire equality before the law, the ambition to become a good citizen; and the *ambitious* white man will respect the *power of the negro votes*, and endeavor by kind treatment, to gain them. Doubtless the former masters will not like this changed condition of things, and occasional distubances will occur (Know-Nothing riots); but let these be be put down by the strong arm of the Government, and ultimately all will acquiesce. Under this policy, I can see a great and happy and prosperous future for the South. But if we take the contrary conrse; if we are to treat the unhappy negro as a pariah, whose touch or presence is contamination, who is to be cast ont of our sight, put away to nimself; if we are to continue to extend over

him our protecting arm, in the sense of treating and using him as a child; if he is to have no power, but to be a poor, helpless being, subject to the insult and outrage of the strong; if he is to be delivered, bound hand and foot, to his former master, who still wants him to be a slave, and who will proceed, under a reconstructed government, to oppress him, and virtually return him to the hardships of slavery, without even the protection of that condition,—then it requires no prophet to foretell that we will have a bloody struggle of races in the South. The negro will soon know too much, know his strength too well to submit to less than his whole rights before the law.

I would that this sad catastrophe might be averted. A member of the Convention that nominated Gen. Cox, one of the committee on resolutions, I gave him my cheerful support; I shall continue to do so. He has proved himself, in the Senate and in the field, worthy of all confidence; but I think he is in grievous error on a great question. I see no one ready to take issue with him on this point, doubtless from the motive that it might do injury to the cause. I think not; and I fear this silence may be taken for agreement with his views, and I would regret that any such erroneous conclusion should be drawn.

W. M. DICKSON.

CINCINNATI, AUGUST 10, 1865.